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Monday, 5 December 1994, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Essy . . . . . (Côte d'Ivoire)

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda item 37 *(continued)*

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(e) Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan

Note by the Secretary-General (A/49/208)

Report of the Secretary-General (A/49/688)

Draft resolution (A/49/L.45)

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I call on the representative of Germany, who will introduce draft resolution A/49/L.45.

Mr. Graf zu Rantzau (Germany): It is with great satisfaction that Germany assumes the task of introducing draft resolution A/49/L.45, entitled "Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan". The text is sponsored also by the following Member States: Afghanistan, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg, Norway, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Uzbekistan, Brunei Darussalam, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Togo, Spain, Tunisia, Turkmenistan and Yemen. As the draft resolution will not be put to the vote today, we urge all other Member States to join in sponsoring it.

I am speaking on behalf of the European Union and of Austria and Sweden. We are convinced that the resolution can contribute to bringing an end to the bloodshed in Afghanistan and to enabling the people of Afghanistan, an overwhelming majority of whom are longing for peace, to live in a State which is ruled by the principles of law. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan must be maintained and strengthened.

The European Union, Austria and Sweden welcome the initiatives of the Secretary-General of the United Nations aimed at paving the way for a lasting peace in Afghanistan, most notably the appointment of a Special Representative for Afghanistan, Ambassador Mestiri, who, through intensified consultations and talks with important Afghan leaders, has created a viable basis for political steps to be taken in the future. On behalf of the European Union, Austria and Sweden, Germany supports the presidential statement made at the 3474th meeting of the Security Council, held on 30 November 1994:

> "The Security Council notes with appreciation the progress made by the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan, led by Ambassador Mahmoud Mestiri, and the report of the Secretary General of 22 November 1994." *(S/PRST/1994/77)*

94-87348 (E)

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In our view, the most important result of the talks held most recently by Special Representative Ambassador Mestiri is the realization that the vast majority of the Afghan people want national *rapprochement*. It must now be the role of the United Nations to support this wish for peace.

In this regard the European Union stated the following, in a memorandum which was circulated concurrently with the statement made by the German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel at the 6th meeting of the General Assembly, held on 27 September 1994, on behalf of the European Union:

> "The European Union deplores that fighting is continuing in Afghanistan, particularly in Kabul, where it has brought death and destruction among civilian populations. It appeals to all Afghan leaders to end their confrontation and to open a peaceful dialogue, and calls on all Member States to stop all support for the parties involved in the Afghan hostilities. The European Union supports the initiative taken by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to send his special representative for Afghanistan, Ambassador Mestiri, on two fact-finding tours to Afghanistan. It endorses the recommendations contained in the Mission's progress report."

The European Union, Austria and Sweden are firmly convinced that, after many years of hostilities between the Afghan leaders and groups which have resulted in a deplorable, massive loss of life and of material property for the population, particularly in Kabul but also in other parts of the country, a first step should now be a political initiative with the objective of promoting the process of national *rapprochement*. To achieve this goal a few measures seem imperative: these we have outlined in the draft resolution and they have been the object of talks between Ambassador Mestiri and Afghan leaders.

We would like to draw special attention to the following recommendations contained in the draft resolution. First, we consider it indispensable that the Secretary-General and his Special Representative for Afghanistan should continue and be unrelenting in their efforts for national *rapprochement* and reconstruction of the country. We support these efforts.

Secondly, we believe that the establishment of a representative "Authoritative Council" is necessary. Its task will include negotiating an immediate and durable cease-fire, creating and controlling a national security force, collecting heavy weapons, and forming an acceptable transitional government in order to create conditions for free and fair elections in the whole country.

Thirdly, we call upon all Afghans to agree to an immediate cease-fire and to support the efforts of the Special Representative, Mr. Mestiri, to facilitate national reconstruction and restore a fully representative and broad-based transitional Government. Likewise we call upon all States to respect Afghanistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity, to refrain from any interference in its internal affairs and to respect the right of the Afghan people to determine their own destiny. Arms deliveries from the outside to Afghanistan must stop.

Fourthly, we call on the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to develop plans for the national reconstruction and rehabilitation of Afghanistan, and we appeal to the international community and international organizations and institutions to provide financial, technical and material assistance for the restoration of Afghanistan. We support the appeal of the Secretary-General for emergency humanitarian assistance for Afghanistan. The draft resolution commends the efforts made by non-governmental organizations in the field. It is up to the Afghan people, however, to create conditions that would ensure that international assistance for the national reconstruction has a chance to succeed.

The European Union, Austria and Sweden are of the firm conviction that the adoption of this draft resolution will be understood by the people of the Islamic State of Afghanistan and by its political leaders and groups as a sign of encouragement and hope that the United Nations is determined to contribute to the long overdue rapprochement among the Afghan people and to bringing an end to the ill-fated bloodshed.

Mr. Ghafoorzai (Afghanistan): Allow me to begin by expressing our warm congratulations to the delegation of the beautiful island State of Palau on having joined this world family. We wish Palau further progress and prosperity.

As the Assembly begins its consideration of agenda item 37 (e), "Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan", I would like to convey the gratitude of the people of Afghanistan and of the Islamic State of Afghanistan to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his continued efforts and strong interest in support of peace for Afghanistan.

At this tragic and grave moment, every strong, sincere gesture of help in ending the present crisis in our homeland will remain a pleasant memory in the mind of present and future generations in Afghanistan — as it will live miserably in the memory of those who seek to take advantage of our problems for their own political purposes.

The decision taken by the Secretary-General in accordance with resolution 48/208, adopted at the last session of the General Assembly, to dispatch a special mission to Afghanistan is considered by Afghans as an important development in the international community's involvement and its assistance towards the complete restoration of peace and stability in their country.

The appointment of a skilful diplomat, an excellent administrator and a sincere personality such as His Excellency Ambassador Mahmoud Mestiri, of the brotherly country of Tunisia, to lead the special mission was an excellent choice. Recognition and identification of the multidimensional issues of Afghanistan — a complex, intermingled society with specific characteristics, sometimes with many recondite aspects — is no easy task. However, it is gratifying to see that the special mission has achieved considerable success in its highly challenging task.

The people of Afghanistan and the Islamic State of Afghanistan, mindful of the fact that the United Nations is a source of common hope for peace, serving no particular interest and thus trustworthy to all, decided to request United Nations support in expediting and strengthening our national efforts aimed at ending the crisis and the military confrontation in our country, at the return of peace and normalcy, and at reconstruction. We are pleased that the special mission, in a series of trips to carry out efforts at mediation, has won the gratitude of our nation and of the Islamic State of Afghanistan. This gratitude reflects our confidence in the Organization.

Afghanistan, owing to its particular strategic location at the crossroads of the interests of world Powers, has been exposed to several massive invasions in the course of its history, most of them associated with extremely devastating consequences — from the aggression of Alexander the Great in the fourth century BC, through the subsequent emergence of Genghis Khan in the thirteenth century and the British colonial invasion from the subcontinent in the nineteenth century, to the recent invasion by the former Soviet Union in the last decade, which continued for 14 devastating years.

All along, these invaders faced vigorous resistance. To diminish the resistance, they had to weaken our national unity, and to achieve this objective the policies of divide and rule and estrangement among the various segments of the population have been used, inflaming ethnic, linguistic and religious sentiments. To nullify these schemes and respond to national crises, our nation has resorted to our traditional measures of peaceful dialogue, discussion, and gatherings of Islamic scholars and elders, and the convening of *jirga*, or councils, as methods typical of Afghan society.

The questions are: Why did Afghanistan encounter such a tragedy this time? Why did Afghans confront each other this time? The answer to these questions can be found in the following factors: First, the former Soviet Union, determined to expand its empire across Afghanistan towards warm waters and realizing the uncompromising opposition of the Afghans to atheism and foreign aggression, resorted to a plan the first steps of which were the destruction of all political, social and even religious institutions and the killing or detention of hundreds of the religious scholars and tribal leaders capable of leading those institutions.

Therefore, structures of that kind, capable of preserving the balance among ethnic groups and tribes and of preventing internal confrontations, were either dismantled or seriously affected and incapacitated. Armed and mobilized Communist groups — with designations such as militias, tribal groups, soldiers of the revolution, and self-defence groups — and mobilized youth organizations were created and established. After the establishment of the Islamic State, the majority of these went underground and engaged in destructive and subversive terrorist activities.

The second factor behind the armed confrontations in some parts of the country results from the massive flow of sophisticated light and heavy weapons and ammunition during 14 years of war. We needed to collect those weapons but, instead, interference on the part of some specific circles beyond our borders, as reaffirmed in paragraph 12 of the Secretary-General's report, appeared as the third factor for causing armed confrontation and for contributing to the misery. Doors of new arms depots were opened by some groups inside the country who were serving outside agendas, and Afghanistan became a huge armoury.

We believe that if, immediately after the collapse of the communist regime and the establishment of the

Islamic State, the Afghan people had been left alone and outsiders had not meddled in our internal affairs, we would surely have proved once again our ability to respond to crises. Peace would already have been returned and reconstruction efforts started.

Some observers have erroneously concluded that there is a civil war in Afghanistan. On the basis of realities and circumstances such an allegation is nothing but a clear misinterpretation of facts. The present crisis in the country is not a civil war but rather an imposed local armed conflict fuelled from outside.

Yes, the Afghan nation is an intermingled society. However, as history recounts, this characteristic of our society has never served as a cause of conflict. On the contrary, in every national crisis and foreign invasion, the Afghan people, irrespective of their ethnicities, as members of one unified family, have formed a solid front against the enemies of their faith and liberty and successfully driven away the invaders preserving their sovereignty, territorial integrity, liberty and Islamic character. Let us recall the historic events of the past decade and ask ourselves if the success of our Jihad in thwarting the former Soviet Union's massive invasion that continued for almost 14 long years accompanied by immeasurable and unimaginable death and destruction is not clear proof of the unity and solidarity of all segments of our society. There is no doubt that such an historic achievement, which greatly contributed to the collapse of the former Soviet empire and became a source of inspiration to many nations for freedom and democracy, would not have been possible without a solid and unified nationwide struggle.

The purpose behind the above illustration and historic account is to justify our expectations from the world community and to call upon it to keep faith in our nation and its foresightedness — to keep trust in our nation as an element of peace, friendship and peaceful coexistence.

From this rostrum, we assure the world community that the Afghan nation is a peaceful nation, very willing to live in peace, understanding and cordiality with its neighbours and moderate in nature, a nation that considers any thinking to the contrary to be incompatible with its essence and character. War always brings ominous phenomena. Drugs is one of them. The problem of drugs in Afghanistan is a product of war.

Yes, we are a Muslim nation, and we are proud of it. We are a nation that believes in peace and hates terror and violence. We are a nation which, on the basis of Koranic instructions, considers the taking of the life of an innocent human being as the greatest sin and the saving of a life as the source of greatest reward.

Political wisdom and far-sightedness require the leaders and politicians of our region to envisage a future of coexistence between their nations and the Afghans, rather than look to short-sighted political objectives. We will once again prevail. What we will be losing is the time and energy to erase from the minds of present and future generations the bitter memories of the unfriendly and hostile attitudes of those who are resorting to stab us in the back at this time of crisis.

With these introductory remarks, let me now turn to the United Nations special mission for Afghanistan.

As previously stated, the Islamic State of Afghanistan, has supported the United Nations mediatory role to bring about a national *rapprochement* by putting an end to foreign interference thus facilitating a political process that would fully restore peace and security, as well as expedite national reconstruction and rehabilitation. This support is extended on the following well-established reasons:

First, the aim of the special mission was found to be in complete harmony with the aspirations of the Afghan nation as exemplified in a number of national peace proposals and initiatives, among them the convening of the broad-based Supreme Islamic Council of Herat in July 1994 on the independent initiative of a national figure, Commander Ismail Khan, the resolution of which greatly contributed in bringing about understandings on principles for a national consensus that are the basis of the current United Nations peace process. In this connection, I should like to assure the Assembly that the entire nation, except for some small circles of warmongers, is eager for peace and considers the military confrontations and weapons unnecessary, destructive and pointless.

Secondly, as previously stated, the Islamic State, is deeply convinced that military means can neither achieve victory for either side nor solve the problems and issues with which we are today confronted. Unfortunately, a faction of the opposition, in violation of every agreement and accord, resorted to the military option as a means of attaining its goals.

Thirdly, the capabilities the United Nation system offers for supporting a sustainable peace process in Afghanistan are adequate. In this connection, my

delegation emphasizes the need for other initiatives to be directed towards complementing the role of the United Nations.

Fourthly, our people have experienced long years of war, and these have produced many social, economic and psychological calamities. A large part of the country remains underdeveloped and ravaged — in some cases beyond rehabilitation. Our present generation is denied education, and I wonder what phenomenon could be more serious to a nation than depriving a complete generation of basic education. These requirements and needs can only be met by adequate international assistance.

Fifthly, the United Nations system has the capabilities to ensure an end to interference in our internal affairs. That is why we welcome the presidential statement of the Security Council dated 30 November 1994, in which, *inter alia*, the Council

> "calls upon all States to take the necessary steps to promote peace in Afghanistan; to prevent the continued flow of weapons, ammunition and military supplies to the warring parties in Afghanistan; and to put an end to this destructive conflict." *(S/PRST/1994/77)*

We have given the highest priority to national efforts to support United Nations endeavours to help Afghanistan end the conflict. We expect our friends to respect our nation's will for peace and to extend the same unreserved support.

The special mission, headed by Ambassador Mahmoud Mestiri, needs the continuous, solid and sustained support of all those who are committed to the right of nations to life and to peace. Failing to take a firm stand would diminish the effectiveness of the United Nations, contribute to the further institutionalization of lawlessness in areas of conflict and further encourage the warmongers to pursue their heinous goals.

I should like at this point to make some general observations on the approach the United Nations is taking in its endeavours and on the need for it to secure appropriate assurances and guarantees for the successful conduct of its mission.

First, respect for a majority vote, based on democratic values, has always been regarded in United Nations goodwill missions as a basic principle in the peaceful solution of problems worldwide. Trying to reach a consensus in achieving a political solution to a crisis is a noble ideal. However, if, owing to the nature of a particular situation — especially if its causes reach beyond internal factors — consensus appears unattainable and all attempts are exhausted, then the application of a preponderant majority vote as a democratic principle and a deterrent against killing and destruction would be completely logical and plausible. This would be particularly true in a situation where one side continued to reject any compromise formula and to violate the right of the innocent civilian population to life and to peace.

In such a situation, a majority vote should in no way be considered as a tyranny of the majority or neglect of the right of the minority. The application of such a vote would be for the good of the people, preventing further bloodshed and destruction, and alleviating tragedies and suffering. The reason we did not insist on the application of a majority vote at this stage was to allow the United Nations mission a certain amount of flexibility. We hope that the opposition, by taking advantage of the application of consensus, will cease to veto meaningful compromise formulas for resolving issues on which the United Nations special mission will soon conduct negotiations.

Secondly, the normal political process for resolving issues, especially those with roots that go beyond internal factors, can be vulnerable at any stage. This requires the United Nations to be vigilant about foreseeing the appropriate guarantees and precautionary measures needed to ensure the smooth conduct of the different phases of the political process.

The Islamic State of Afghanistan, for its part, would like to assure the United Nations that the Afghan people and its military forces will stand behind the Organization at every stage of the process, especially during the transfer of power, by taking appropriate precautionary measures to avoid any military sabotage or plot to derail the peace process.

As far as the United Nations role in this matter is concerned, we would like to see a strong commitment to standing firm until the entire peace process is completed. We do not want to see Kabul turn into another Bihac.

I should like briefly to state the position of my delegation with regard to the observations and recommendations contained in paragraphs 75 to 81 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/49/688), as reflected in the operative part of the draft resolution before us today.

The Islamic State of Afghanistan would be happy to discuss every dimension of the proposals and the recommendations of the special mission. Many issues indeed may emerge in the implementation of the step-by-step political process, and these will have to be solved on the ground.

The Islamic State of Afghanistan supports the phases referred to in paragraphs 2 and 3 of the draft resolution pertaining to an immediate and durable cease-fire. It is even ready to support the assignment of a cease-fire monitoring group composed of both Afghan and international monitors. The Organization of the Islamic Conference has expressed its readiness to assist Afghanistan in this particular matter.

As reflected in paragraph 2 of the draft resolution, the Islamic State of Afghanistan is in favour of establishing an Authoritative Council, rightly defined in the draft resolution as broad-based. This Authoritative Council therefore must indeed be broad-based. It must not be confined to the representatives of the political parties. The Islamic State of Afghanistan firmly believes that 18 persons — two from each of the nine parties — together with 10 independent Afghan persons who do not belong to the parties, as well as representatives of all provinces of Afghanistan — two delegates from each province, elected by the provincial councils — must actively participate in the Authoritative Council. Such a composition would allow all segments of the population of Afghanistan to feel that they were truly participating in the work of the Council and involved in making decisions about their own destiny.

Concerning the representation of the parties composing the Authoritative Council, let us note that only nine parties recognized during the 14 years of struggle participated in earlier meetings, including the one convened in Jalalabad last year. Recently, new claims have emerged for recognizing another group and making it eligible for membership in the Authoritative Council. The majority of the parties that participated in last year's Jalalabad meeting do not, however, recognize the legality of such claims, which would only multiply in the future as other groups and factions came forth with them.

The Islamic State of Afghanistan, guided by the views and decisions of the preponderant majority, cannot shoulder the responsibility of accepting any increase in the number of the parties allowed to take part in the Authoritative Council. Such an increase could be made only in the light of a legislative text on political parties enacted by a future legislative body, specifying standards and criteria for accepting new political parties, including the procedure for such acceptance.

Regarding the idea of establishing a national security force, referred to in paragraph 2 (b) of the draft resolution, the Islamic State of Afghanistan would like the General Assembly to be aware of the practical difficulties involved in implementing this idea. We strongly believe that an order of priority should be established in the step-by-step implementation of the peace process. The most urgent and key issue is the establishment of the Authoritative Council, as is set out in paragraph 9 of the Secretary- General's report and paragraph 2 of the draft resolution under consideration. The establishment of a transitional government should be the second step. It is only then that the question of the creation of a national security force could be considered by the transitional government, with the approval of the Authoritative Council.

The Authoritative Council, as the supreme executive body, would decide on the genuinely neutral character of such a force. We wish to emphasize that this force cannot be established before the Authoritative Council is established. We wish to place on record the need to respect the chronological order of the peace process, a task which is expected to be performed by the special mission in cooperation with the Islamic State of Afghanistan and other parties involved.

Afghanistan firmly believes in the necessity of establishing a transitional government, the task of which has been elaborated in the report and in the draft resolution. As far as the duration of this transitional government is concerned, the Islamic State of Afghanistan would be flexible.

To allow the political process to consolidate, President Rabbani, in a message read out before this General Assembly by Mr. Lafraie, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, announced his readiness to transfer power to a responsible and legitimate authority. The details of the views of the Islamic State regarding the peace process are to be found in a declaration dated 1 November 1994, issued as Security Council document S/1994/1277 of 11 November.

A strong desire on the part of the majority of forces and parties in Afghanistan leads us to be optimistic about Ambassador Mestiri's forthcoming negotiations inside Afghanistan on the implementation of the renewed

mandate he will be receiving with the unanimous adoption of the draft resolution under consideration.

Turning to the reconstruction efforts, it is a matter of satisfaction to my delegation to see that the progress report of 1 July and the current report of the Secretary-General both emphasize the existence of a consensus that a major international effort is needed to assist in the reconstruction of Afghanistan as integral to establishing a sustainable peace process. We are happy to see that the notion of peace first and reconstruction assistance second, which brought suffering to civilians and set-back the peace process itself, is no longer an issue, and that there appears to be a general agreement on the immediate initiation of reconstruction efforts in areas of the country where peace prevails.

The identification of a range of projects suitable for immediate implementation and attractive to donors, with an estimated value of $105 million, as set forth in the annex to the report, is a preliminary step towards generating donor confidence in and support for the overall peace process. We are sure that the proposed projects will enjoy the full support of the international community. The Islamic State of Afghanistan is hopeful that urgent and increased attention will be paid to the re-establishment and rehabilitation of medical and educational systems in the country.

Last but not least, I refer to the need of our suffering people and war-torn country for emergency humanitarian assistance. We strongly believe that the world community should view emergency humanitarian assistance to the inhabitants of the troubled areas of the globe as immune from political considerations. The fundamental human rights and the integrity and dignity of persons — to the preservation of which we have all committed ourselves in the Charter of our Organization and in human rights documents — are being violated in Afghanistan as a result of the prolonged war and its manifestations. Can we expect a child to enjoy human rights when he is being shelled by rockets, sleeping in hunger and weak from malnutrition, or a father who is searching in frustration for a loaf of bread to feed his family but unable to afford it.

The Afghan nation sincerely expects the world community to respond in a positive way to the renewed appeal of the United Nations Secretary-General for $106 million for one year's emergency humanitarian assistance. The return of peace and the reconstruction of our shattered homeland is our primary task, but we cannot do it without the Assembly's support.

In conclusion, I should like to express my delegation's gratitude and thanks to the Permanent Representative of Germany, who was kind enough to introduce the draft resolution on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Abdellah (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation, which has the honour of being one of the sponsors of the draft resolution before our Assembly today, warmly thanks the Secretary-General of our Organization for the comprehensive report he has submitted under the agenda item on emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan.

The phases outlined by the Secretary-General within the framework of the tireless efforts he has been making since the adoption of resolution 48/208 of 21 December 1993 illustrate the earnestness, perseverance and selflessness with which our Organization has addressed the Afghan question. The Secretary-General's special representative in Afghanistan, Ambassador Mahmoud Mestiri — whose experience, competence and sense of duty have strengthened the authority and credibility of the United Nations in the eyes of the belligerents — has striven in recent months to initiate a process of political reconciliation that will help to promote peace and the reconstruction of this country, ravaged by many years of civil war.

As a member of the Ad Hoc Committee on Afghanistan of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Tunisia has made continuous efforts within the framework of the OIC, on the bilateral level and in other forums to bring home to the international community and the various Afghan parties the need to settle the conflict. Apart from having claimed thousands of innocent victims to date and destroyed the country's entire civilian infrastructure, the civil war is undeniably a threat to regional peace and security, has provoked external intervention and interference and is spreading in a way that must be contained.

In this context, my delegation welcomes the statement of the Security Council at its 3474th meeting, on 30 November, reporting the acceptance by the warring parties of a step-by-step process of national reconciliation through the establishment of a fully representative and broad-based Authoritative Council, which would negotiate and oversee a cease-fire, establish a national security force to collect heavy weapons and provide for security throughout the country, and form a transitional

government to lay the groundwork for a democratically chosen government, possibly utilizing traditional structures such as a "Grand Assembly".

Moreover, it is on this basis that the Secretary-General pointed out in his report that any progress in the Afghan conflict will depend on the early establishment of the authoritative council, which would be:

> "a test of the commitment of the Afghan leaders to the peace process, upon which the international community's readiness to continue its peacemaking efforts in Afghanistan will depend". (*A/49/688, para. 76*)

My delegation therefore encourages all the Afghan parties to speed up the process of national reconciliation so as to enable the United Nations to proceed with its support for the reconstruction efforts which the country so desperately needs and to help the Afghan people to enjoy the dividends of peace.

While applauding the action of the bodies of the United Nations system, such as the United Nations Development Programme, (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund, (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNIDCP), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the various non-governmental organizations which are operating in the country and are making laudable efforts, sometimes under very precarious security conditions, we urge Member States and the international financial institutions to respond generously to the appeals for funds to finance humanitarian and development activities. We are convinced that, if they are to be successful, political efforts made by the United Nations must enjoy the economic and financial support of the international community.

In addition to efforts to reconstruct what has been destroyed by war, and to initiate the development programmes needed for economic recovery, there is another fundamental aspect — aid for mine clearance — which should command the special attention of the international community. The indiscriminate laying of land mines throughout the country close to crossing points and on the outskirts of urban settlements has considerably worsened the already precarious situation of the civilian population, threatens humanitarian convoys and represents a danger for the refugees who, to the satisfaction of the Secretary-General, are starting to come back to their country, encouraged by the hope of finally setting up their homes there again.

There can be no doubt that international action for Afghanistan hinges upon the willingness of the Afghan parties fully to acknowledge the tragedy taking place in their country and immediately to take urgent steps to implement the recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General.

Mr. Batu (Turkey): At the outset, I should like to commend the Secretary-General for the comprehensive report he has submitted in document A/49/688 of 22 November 1994, on the overall situation in Afghanistan, the implementation of the emergency humanitarian assistance programme in that war-stricken country and the work of the United Nations special mission.

We would also like to express our gratitude and full support for the tireless efforts of the United Nations special mission to Afghanistan, led by Mr. Mestiri.

More than two years have gone by since encouraging changes took place in the political situation in Afghanistan. The establishment of an interim government in Kabul at that time had brought us hopes that at long last all Afghans would put aside their differences and start the process of reconciliation. We had hoped that a broad-based reconciliation process including all groups could start. However, to our great dismay, armed conflict has resumed, causing heavy casualties, the total devastation of the economic infrastructure and a deepening refugee crisis affecting not only Afghanistan but also neighbouring countries of the region.

The continuing hostilities not only have created humanitarian problems of outstanding proportions, but have also endangered the process of political normalization. We therefore once again appeal to all parties to the conflict, especially the leaders of the warring parties, to agree on an immediate cease-fire and to support the special mission's efforts to facilitate the process of national *rapprochement*. We believe this would also allow for steady progress in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the devastated country.

We attach great importance to the unity and territorial integrity of Afghanistan. In this respect, we fully support the United Nations special mission's wide-ranging consultations with Afghan parties and its

proposals for bringing an end to the factional fighting, setting in motion the process of political reconciliation and embarking on the challenging task of the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Afghanistan.

We therefore welcome the acceptance by the warring parties and other Afghan representatives, as noted in the Secretary-General's report, of a step-by-step process of national reconciliation through the establishment of a fully representative and broad-based Authoritative Council.

Turkey is co-sponsoring the draft resolution entitled "Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan" which is before the General Assembly. Our thanks and appreciation go to the German delegation in particular and other interested delegations in general which have been closely involved in the drafting of this resolution. In this respect, we strongly support the appeal in paragraph 6 to all Member States to provide all possible financial, technical and material assistance for the repatriation and settlement of Afghan refugees and displaced persons and for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. The international community should actively respond to the Secretary-General's appeal for humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan by generously contributing to the Fund set up for this purpose. I should also like to take this opportunity to commend all relevant United Nations agencies taking part in the emergency humanitarian assistance programme for Afghanistan and for their strenuous efforts to remedy the humanitarian situation in that country, as well as to help resolve the refugee issue.

On the basis of the close historical and cultural bonds existing between Turkey and Afghanistan, we will continue to shoulder our responsibility to promote peace and prosperity in Afghanistan. We therefore reiterate our support for the draft resolution before us, and hope that it will be adopted by consensus as a manifestation of international solidarity in assisting the people of war-torn Afghanistan.

Mr. Kawthar (Saudi Arabia) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: I should like to inform the General Assembly that Albania, Egypt, Pakistan and Portugal have become sponsors of the draft resolution contained in document A/49/L.45.

The issue of the brotherly country of Afghanistan has been and continues to be of great interest to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia continues to provide assistance to the people of Afghanistan as it did throughout their heroic struggle. The situation as it exists now and as it has been over the past two years is cause for great concern. However, we are hopeful that with the assistance of the international community, under the aegis of the United Nations, the people of Afghanistan will soon find a peaceful solution to the conflict that is ravaging their country, and will turn their attention to the rebuilding of Afghanistan. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will stand shoulder to shoulder with them in their quest for peace and reconstruction.

In the light of the foregoing, we are pleased to be a sponsor of the draft resolution presented by Germany entitled "Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan". The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia believes that this draft resolution would, if adopted, provide the best solution to the political and economic problems facing Afghanistan today. This may indeed be the last such opportunity to help the people of Afghanistan out of the plight that now besets them.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia strongly supports the United Nations special mission to Afghanistan under the leadership of Ambassador Mahmoud Mestiri. We are also grateful for the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General in respect of Afghanistan, and we support his recent report on the subject.

The Security Council presidential statement of 30 November 1994 also meets our expectations. We are encouraged by the Council's reaffirmation of its

> "readiness to assist the Afghan people in their desire to achieve peace and tranquillity in their country." *(S/PRST/1994/77, p. 2)*

The Security Council should indeed continue to support the efforts of the United Nations special mission to Afghanistan and should keep the situation under constant scrutiny.

We hope that the draft resolution will receive wide-ranging support, both in word and in deed, at the United Nations. We wish our Afghani brothers security and prosperity. We hope that they and their leaders will help Ambassador Mestiri in carrying out his mission and achieving the goals that the Afghans themselves aspire after.

Mr. Ahsen (Pakistan): My delegation is thankful for the efforts made by the Secretary-General to secure the implementation of resolution 48/208, entitled

"Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan". These efforts reflect the seriousness with which the Secretary-General views the prevailing situation in Afghanistan. We should also like to express our appreciation for the work done by the Secretary-General's Personal Representative, Mr. Sotirios Mousouris.

I have the honour of announcing that my delegation has become a sponsor of draft resolution A/49/L.45.

It is evident that the international community, and especially the friends of Afghanistan, must collaborate in assisting that war-torn country to build its way back to a stable political and economic environment that is conducive to the betterment of the Afghan people. The Afghan nation has suffered a great deal. Its people are tired of the conflict and want a return to peace.

My delegation would like to congratulate the special mission, led by Ambassador Mahmoud Mestiri. Its gives an important insight into the situation prevailing in Afghanistan.

The destruction in Afghanistan caused by 14 years of cruel war and by the intensification of the fighting in Kabul and elsewhere in the country since January 1994 is difficult to imagine. Of a population of 15 million, over 6 million fled the country during the war and sought refuge, mainly in Iran and Pakistan, but also in other parts of the world. A further 2.5 million were internally displaced. At present nearly 200,000 internally displaced people in camps near Jalalabad are bracing themselves for a severe winter. This magnitude of human suffering is without precedent.

Now that the foreign occupiers have left, the world's attention seems to have turned elsewhere. The people of Afghanistan are left to address the gigantic task of rehabilitation and national reconstruction. This task is indeed monumental. The special mission found a strong feeling among the Afghans

> "that the international community and the United Nations had deserted Afghanistan for the past two years." *(A/49/208, para. 23 (g))*

The findings of the mission and the implementation of its recommendations will go a long way towards assuring the people of Afghanistan that the international community has not forgotten their plight.

The report of the special mission points out that the effect of the war is being felt throughout the country, spreading instability to various regions. The social fabric and economic life in Afghanistan have been devastated, institutions and the physical infrastructure having been completely destroyed. Health, education and other services are virtually inoperative. Unemployment, poverty, malnutrition, deprivation and disease afflict most of Afghanistan's 17 million people, of whom 15 per cent are displaced, homeless or destitute in the middle of a long and difficult winter.

The presence of land-mines has been indicated as one of the major obstacles to the successful repatriation of the Afghan refugees. According to the report of the special mission, there are in Afghanistan 456 square kilometres of mine-fields, of which 113 square kilometres have been given high-priority classification for clearance.

Nearly 400,000 people have been disabled, mainly due to the 10 million mines that are reported to have been laid in Afghanistan. The effect of these mines on the civilian population, especially small children, is heart-rending. The mine clearance programme of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance in Afghanistan is therefore of critical importance from the point of view not only of the personal security of the Afghan returnees, but also of the rapid return of refugees, as well as the revival of the local economies in Afghanistan. We urge the donor community to contribute generously towards this programme, which reportedly will take another four or five years to complete all its work.

Pakistan has always been a firm supporter of all endeavours to establish peace and normalcy in Afghanistan. It is heartening to note that Ambassador Mestiri's special mission started its work in Quetta, the capital of Pakistan's province of Baluchistan. The Quetta process set in motion a participatory process to which all Afghan leaders contributed and which has led to some important recommendations.

The suffering of the Afghan people need not be prolonged by mindless conflict and violence. It is now time to make a sincere and serious effort to promote peace in this war-torn country. We urge the various Afghan factions to put aside their rivalries and, in the interests of preventing further loss of innocent life, embark upon a meaningful path of reconciliation amongst themselves. Prolongation of the conflict will only serve to perpetuate the miseries of the Afghan people, with

whom the Government and the people of Pakistan have ancient ties of brotherhood.

With regard to humanitarian assistance, it is evident from the consolidated appeal launched by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs a few weeks ago that there is an urgent need for such assistance to Afghanistan. While assistance for the economic reconstruction of Afghanistan is of great importance, the critical needs of the internally displaced people near Jalalabad and the refugees that continue to stay in camps in Pakistan and Iran should be urgently met by the international community.

The nations of the world invested heavily in the long and bloody conflict in Afghanistan. The outcome of that war was described as a triumph for the free world. While the responsibility for establishing peace rests with the Afghans themselves, it would be tragic if the economically battered Afghan nation was left to fend for itself. The world community is morally obligated to respond with generosity to Afghanistan's plight. We sincerely hope that the international community will respond swiftly and decisively to the consolidated appeal so that the people of Afghanistan are enabled to intensify their efforts to rebuild their shattered lives and restore the heavily damaged national infrastructure.

Mr. Kharrazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): The situation in Afghanistan and the ongoing hostilities in that neighbouring country of ours continue to be a source of grave concern to the Islamic Republic of Iran. We rejoiced with the people of Afghanistan over their victory and the establishment of an Islamic State in that country in 1992. However, the ensuing fighting among different factions inside Afghanistan has not only resulted in the martyrdom and injury of many innocent Afghans but has also prevented the reconstruction of that war-stricken country.

Since the beginning we have called for respect for Afghanistan's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence and non-interference in the internal affairs of that brotherly Muslim country. We have called for the cessation of hostilities and sought ways and means to achieve a lasting cease-fire between the warring sides in Afghanistan. Dispatching high-level delegations to Afghanistan to canvass the positions of all factions and inviting them to talk to each other rather than fighting have been in line with our main objective, which is to bring peace and normalcy back to Afghanistan. The Islamic Republic of Iran has also been cooperating with the peace initiatives of neighbouring countries, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the United Nations.

Cognizant of the complexity of the situation in Afghanistan and familiar with the positions of different factions, we are of the firm view that only through the establishment of a representative council encompassing all Afghan factions can one hope for an early peaceful settlement of the crisis through the holding of free and fair elections throughout the country.

The ongoing proximity talks in Tehran under the auspices of the OIC and with the participation of the United Nations attests to the fact that the Islamic Republic of Iran seizes every opportunity to bring all Afghan sides together in order to arrive at a negotiated settlement. It is in this spirit that we have welcomed and cooperated with the mission of Ambassador Mestiri of the United Nations in this important and difficult endeavour. Ambassador Mestiri has the full support of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran in his efforts in bringing about a national *rapprochement* in Afghanistan.

The necessity of coordination between all efforts aimed at restoring peace and normalcy in Afghanistan need not be emphasized. We should enhance the existing level of coordination between the efforts of the United Nations, the OIC and the neighbouring countries.

The country, mired in 15 years of foreign occupation and civil war, has lost a great opportunity for development. The magnitude of the destruction and bloodshed is incredible. Most of the infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, irrigation systems, farms, industries, schools and hospitals, has been destroyed. More than 1 million people have been killed and over 2 million disabled, and nearly 8 million people either took refuge in neighbouring countries or were internally displaced.

Since 1980 the Islamic Republic of Iran has been hosting 2.5 million Afghan refugees. We have received and protected these refugees with a very high standard of treatment based on our Islamic humanitarian and international commitments. However, the international assistance and contributions for these refugees have been marginal and not commensurate with the size and magnitude of refugee problems in the country. The situation is similar with regard to the repatriation of Afghan refugees, which started in 1992.

There are still 1.7 million Afghan refugees in Iran. There is an urgent need for international assistance in order to be able to plan the repatriation operation comprehensively and from all its various aspects,

including adequate assistance for reintegration facilities for returnees and the development of socio-economic infrastructures of Afghanistan as a whole.

Unfortunately, since the outbreak of hostilities in Kabul in January 1994, as a result of unabated shelling and street fighting about 7,000 people have lost their lives and 21,000 more have been seriously wounded. At the same time, half a million people have fled the capital. At present, 1 million residents of the city are stranded between warring factions.

Against this background, the restoration of essential services, revival of local economies, resettlement of refugees, and de-mining are but some of the onerous tasks that cannot be accomplished without international cooperation. In this respect, the consolidated inter-agency appeal for emergency humanitarian assistance of October 1994 highlights how some modest international support has led to the resettlement of 2 million refugees over a period of two years, the clearing of over one third of priority mined areas and the feeding of almost 1 million people. Given the acute situation of the country, we sincerely hope that the recent consolidated appeal launched by the Secretary-General, which addresses specific needs of the Afghan people for the winter and summer seasons, will receive adequate attention from the donor countries.

We for our part have provided fuel, food and non-food assistance to the people of Afghanistan on an ongoing basis, and that task will continue to be pursued with devotion. Just a few weeks ago the Islamic Republic of Iran, along with the Afghan Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization, initiated a vaccination plan for Afghan children with 8 million doses of vaccines. With the help of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the plan will be implemented throughout Afghanistan.

Let me now turn to the overall question of international humanitarian assistance. Two years have elapsed since the establishment of the United Nations new international emergency-assistance arrangement. A thorough examination of the experiences learned and the prevailing international situation can help us to probe ways and means of enhancing the system's response capacity.

At present the world is facing an unprecedented increase in both the number and the magnitude of complex emergencies and natural disasters. As the Secretary-General notes in his report, today, while more than 30 million people in 29 countries are in dire need of emergency assistance, over 20 million more in sub-Saharan Africa are threatened by severe drought. At the same time, the tasks of resettling refugees and internally displaced persons, demining and demobilization have imposed onerous pressures on the resources available for relief operations.

In the light of such new challenges, and to guarantee the effectiveness of the system's response capacity, the following points should be carefully addressed.

First, the success of international measures hinges to a great extent on the principle of the humanity, neutrality and impartiality of emergency assistance. Every attempt should be made to rid assistance of political incentives. In addition, there is a need to establish a line of communication between the emergency relief coordinator or his special envoy and the parties to a conflict in order to convince them that the humanitarian operation is not political in nature. In this respect I should like to emphasize the importance of the provisions of paragraph 27 of General Assembly resolution 48/42, which calls for full consultation with the emergency relief coordinator in the overall planning of a peace-keeping operation with a humanitarian component. It goes without saying, however, that there should be a distinct division of responsibility between humanitarian and peace-keeping operations, in order to preserve the neutrality and impartiality of relief activities.

Secondly, lack of coordination between resident coordinators and special coordinators of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) can sometimes give rise to peculiar problems at the field level. Ability to fulfil humanitarian mandates in conflict situations is an issue of most serious concern to humanitarian organizations. We therefore believe that in developing rapid-response procedures and teams to support affected countries the Inter-Agency Standing Committee should also focus on preparing working guidelines to clarify the mandates of all who work at the field level, including the mandates of the special coordinators and UNDP resident coordinators.

Thirdly, in the case of natural disasters, preventive measures are more cost-effective. Given the death toll and destruction caused by sudden-onset natural disasters, there is a need for more concerted international actions in contingency planning, preventive and preparedness measures and early warning to reduce the catastrophic consequences of natural disasters. In recent years the international community, heavily preoccupied with complex emergencies, has unfortunately paid less

attention to the human suffering of the victims of natural disasters.

The World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction held at Yokohama from 21 to 27 May 1994 provided us with an opportunity to address the question of national and local disaster programmes more comprehensively. One of the most outstanding achievements of the Conference, to which the Islamic Republic of Iran fully subscribes, is the call for a wider awareness and political commitment among policy makers to enhance international cooperation in disaster management.

Most often, the momentum to render assistance to affected countries fades at the relief stage and only a small portion of disaster losses are, as a result, redressed. The international financial institutions should therefore play a more dynamic role in mobilizing the necessary financial resources to ensure a continuum from relief to development. Meanwhile, more efforts should be made to explore the potential of military and civil-defence assets to provide support to peace-time emergency relief operations. Promotion of the Oslo Guidelines, especially through training and field exercises, is of great importance.

Fourthly, we recognize the need for the prioritization of relief requirements. However, this exercise should not be at the expense of the necessary requirements for rehabilitation and development or cause any delay in the urgent supply of critical items to the victims.

Fifthly, the severe shortfall in financial resources continues to imperil the implementation of humanitarian programmes. Statistics indicate that there is a wide gap between the requirements and the contributions made to various relief programmes. To highlight the problem, it is worth nothing that, according to the Secretary-General, although assessed humanitarian requirements for the period mid-1992 to the end of 1993 have risen by 28.83 per cent, contributions have increased by only 8.5 per cent. The situation of the Central Revolving Fund is another matter of concern. From the beginning of negotiations on the Fund's objectives and ceiling we have repeatedly stated that $50 million would not be sufficient to meet the increasing demands for humanitarian assistance worldwide. Nevertheless, despite various initiatives launched by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to expedite the reimbursement process, the Fund faced a dangerous situation earlier this year. The total available resources of the Fund were no more than $4 million, which could not even respond to the initial requirements of one major emergency. This year, therefore, drawing on the lessons learned from our experiences of the past two years, we should reach agreement on a new ceiling that could secure the viability and effective functioning of the Fund.

Sixthly, we welcome the attempts made by the Secretary-General in his report to elaborate on the positive role of regional emergency stockpiles in facilitating a cost-effective response to sudden emergencies. However, the report falls short of providing action-oriented recommendations.

Mr. Singh (India): I take the floor with a heavy heart as we once again consider the question of "Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan". The title of the agenda item spells out the crucial objectives that must be achieved. It also suggests that what has been done so far is woefully inadequate. What is happening in Afghanistan is nothing short of a profound human tragedy.

The end of the cold war has not, contrary to expectations, brought Afghanistan any closer to peace. India has traditional and historical ties of friendship with Afghanistan and its people. Geographical and cultural proximity have cemented the bonds between us over centuries of interaction. The continuing violence and the unsettled political conditions in Afghanistan are, therefore, a matter of profound concern for my country.

Several attempts have been made in recent years to restore peace in Afghanistan so that the pressing tasks of national reconciliation and the reconstruction of a shattered and war-ravaged economy can commence in earnest. Regrettably, political stability has continued to elude Afghanistan. More than 12,000 people are reported to have perished in the clashes since April 1992. The toll, in terms of human lives, displaced persons, infrastructure and resources, is immeasurable. The incessant rain of rocket attacks, shelling and aerial bombardment continues unabated. The unsettled conditions in Afghanistan have a direct and adverse fall-out on peace and security in the region. My country is also directly affected by these upheavals.

Mr. Abdellah (Tunisia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

India believes that the most pressing need of the hour is a political settlement taking into account the wishes of all sections of the Afghan people, without any form of external interference. In this context, there must

be an immediate cessation of foreign interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

India strongly supports the tireless endeavours of my friend Mahmoud Mestiri, head of the special mission of the United Nations, to forge a political consensus among the Afghan people and to work towards the creation of a political structure acceptable to all segments of Afghan society and a durable nation-wide cease-fire. Mahmoud Mestiri is a balanced and mature diplomat of vast experience and the Secretary-General could not have chosen a better individual to head this mission. Without an early return of peace, there can be no progress towards an early overall settlement in Afghanistan.

The people of Afghanistan continue to suffer untold misery and hardship. It is no longer fashionable to focus on their plight. But focus on it and provide succour we must. The other urgent requirement, thus, is that of providing humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan. India has an abiding concern for the welfare and prosperity of the Afghan people. We have always been ready to contribute to the reconstruction of Afghanistan in the fullest possible measure. This has been our tradition. Most recently, for example, during 1992, India supplied relief items worth Rs 15 million through various programmes of the United Nations. In addition, as part of our bilateral commitment to Afghanistan, we supplied essential items, medicines and medical equipment worth Rs 47 million. During 1993 and 1994 we have provided tea and medicines worth Rs 14 million under United Nations programmes. We have recently also delivered consignments of tea, valued at Rs 4.5 million, as bilateral assistance.

India has consistently stood for a political settlement in Afghanistan, a settlement that reflects the aspirations of the Afghan people and arrived at by the Afghans themselves. India has always strongly supported the unity, stability, independence and non-aligned character of Afghanistan. We will continue to strive to achieve these objectives.

Mr. Hakim (Bangladesh): My delegation is pleased to have the opportunity to speak on agenda item 37 (e), entitled "Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan".

The year 1994 has been a time of trial and flux for the people of Afghanistan. The flickering hope of a smooth transition from the decade old hostility to a durable peace received a setback when the capital, Kabul, came under bombardment on New Year's Day. Unfortunately, despite efforts to arrest the violence, the internecine fight in and around the city continues. Kabul has remained tense for the last 11 months, and the security situation is still volatile there. The country still appears to be polarized along partisan lines.

Bangladesh has traditionally maintained close and friendly ties with the people of Afghanistan, and firmly stood behind them during the period of their struggle against foreign aggression and occupation. Obviously, we are anguished at the renewed cycle of violence that is taking place in Afghanistan at this time. Our concern continues over the lack of accord necessary for the country's recovery from the legacy of confrontation and chaos and the suffering and misery brought to the millions by the ongoing fratricidal fight. South Asia, including Bangladesh, eagerly awaits the negotiation and consolidation of peace, as uncertainty in Afghanistan impacts on the region as a whole.

The United Nations has remained actively involved in promoting political reconciliation and economic reconstruction since the new Government took power. The current report of the Secretary General lucidly summarized the efforts made by the United Nations to persuade the parties and personalities in Afghanistan of the urgency of finding an acceptable framework to resolve the problem. This report underscores the initiatives taken by United Nations agencies to organize the repatriation of Afghan refugees and the necessary reconstruction and rehabilitation measures, along with recommendations for future action. My delegation finds the report very useful in understanding the complex dynamics of Afghan policies and the work that lies ahead to bring the country out of the present crisis.

The root of the problem in the past arose from outside interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs. With that removed, the fundamental expectation was that the people could decide their destiny through their own free choice. It is of some concern that external influence still persists in Afghanistan through various means, with a view to influencing the course of events in this war-ravaged country. Bangladesh, therefore, reiterates its call for full respect for Afghanistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity. It also urges that no step be taken that might hinder national reconciliation. We fully support the call the President of the Security Council made on 11 August and 30 November 1994, urging all States to halt the supply of weapons to the parties involved in the Afghan conflict.

At the same time, we endorse the call addressed to all parties and personalities, and to the people of Afghanistan fully to cooperate with the special mission of the Secretary-General, which, *inter alia*, has recommended working out a formula of national reconciliation through the establishment of a representative council with the authority to ensure a durable cease-fire and a complete cessation of hostilities throughout the country, and through the creation of a security force for Kabul. That force could subsequently be transformed into a national defence force. The formation of a transitional government to which the current Government could hand over power is the next logical step.

My delegation is encouraged by the emerging signs of progress made during the meeting of Ambassador Mahmoud Mestiri, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, with Afghan leaders of various parties during his visit to Afghanistan in September and October this year. We also welcome the Secretary-General's continuing efforts to forge an understanding among the Afghan leaders with a view to working out a viable formula for a political settlement. The Bangladesh Government also endorses the constructive initiatives taken by the Special Representative.

The Bangladesh Government considers the proposal of Secretary-General to establish an office in Afghanistan for coordinating the efforts of the United Nations to be a positive step. We are sure that this move would send a positive signal of the enduring commitment of the United Nations to help the Afghans in resolving their national problems. For our part, we stand ready to extend all support to efforts of the Secretary-General that would contribute to strengthening the forces of moderation and reconciliation in Afghanistan.

Any sustainable peace in Afghanistan will require substantial regeneration of economic activity, which could begin with massive rehabilitation and reconstruction work. My delegation is pleased to note the commendable efforts made so far by the various agencies of the United Nations to arrange the repatriation of Afghan refugees from Pakistan and Iran and the rehabilitation of internally displaced persons. The report of the Secretary-General has clearly outlined the reconstruction projects being implemented under the active supervision of United Nations agencies. Generous support from the international community is required to sustain the ongoing reconstruction programmes of the United Nations in Afghanistan.

Given the fragile ground situation in Afghanistan at this time,the United Nations remains the only hope for facilitating and consolidating the much needed national reconciliation of the Afghan people. My delegation remains optimistic that the United Nations through its special mission in Afghanistan will be able to assist the Afghan people to steer the country out of the current impasse.

We would like to conclude by underlining the urgent need for enduring commitment on the part of the international community to provide emergency humanitarian assistance and other material and financial support to Afghanistan for making peace an attractive alternative to conflict and chaos.

Mr. Inderfurth (United States of America): The United States is pleased to co-sponsor the resolution on Afghanistan. This is a balanced resolution. It provides a rationale for emergency humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan; and it sets forth an appropriate underpinning for peacemaking efforts of the United Nations special mission, authorized by this Assembly one year ago.

During the past year, my Government has made clear its concern about the upsurge in fighting among the warring Afghan parties. These "indiscriminate attacks", as the draft resolution calls them in its ninth preambular paragraph, have caused grievous suffering and death to innocent Afghan men, women and children. During the first nine months of 1994, the International Committee of the Red Cross estimated that rocket and artillery attacks among rival Afghan warlords caused at least 7,000 deaths and more than 80,000 injuries in the capital, Kabul, alone. In addition, more than 200,000 innocent civilians are estimated to have been displaced within the city, many of them living in substandard conditions and facing severe hardship, even starvation, this winter.

The humanitarian dimensions of this tragedy are such that just last week my Government issued a declaration that a state of emergency existed in Kabul. Without emergency assistance, further suffering and loss of life are not simply probable, but inevitable. Under United States law, our disaster declaration triggers the allocation of additional United States funding which will go directly to international relief organizations for emergency aid to Afghans trapped in the capital region. We hope that other Governments will join us in responding to this urgent humanitarian need.

But the situation is not without hope. My Government is pleased to take note of the Secretary-

General's report to the General Assembly on the progress made by the United Nations special mission to Afghanistan under the able guidance of Ambassador Mahmoud Mestiri. We are particularly pleased that the special mission has developed a promising momentum towards peace as a result of the September-October meetings held in Quetta, Pakistan. Those meetings forged a noteworthy consensus on a staged plan that could lead to full national political reconciliation. In its initial stages, the plan calls for the organization of an Authoritative Council, which would oversee a cease-fire and the creation of a neutral security force. These simple but important first steps would be the basis for the re-establishment of a broad-based, fully representative Government in Afghanistan.

But the plan recommended in Quetta can bring peace to Afghanistan only if, first, trust can be re-established among the Afghan people and their leaders and, secondly, the interested Governments within and outside the region are willing to back the work of the United Nations special mission.

My Government joins in the draft resolution's call on the Afghan people, especially the leaders of the warring parties, to put an end to their destructive conflict and to cooperate with the special mission as it returns to the region later this month. Instead of pursuing their fruitless quest to achieve power by force of arms, the leaders of the warring parties should agree to devote their energies to the search for peace. If they choose to work with the special mission as it elaborates its proposals, they can build an irreversible momentum away from war and towards peace.

The draft resolution we join in sponsoring also calls on all Governments, particularly those in the region, to put their full weight behind the special mission's plan. It is no secret that the prolongation of the war in Afghanistan derives in large part from outside financing or provision of warmaking supplies to one or another favoured faction. And it is no exaggeration to say that the continuation of this situation is a recipe for disaster. As a spokesman of my Government stated on 27 October, Governments concerned about Afghanistan should channel their assistance for Afghanistan's development and reconstruction through the United Nations rather than providing funds or weapons to the warlords.

It is time for our Governments to work together to put an end to the fighting in Afghanistan and devote our efforts to peace. We call on all States of this Assembly to fully back the work of the United Nations special mission and to recognize its primary role in the peacemaking process.

Peace in Afghanistan, however difficult and elusive that aim may be, is a worthy end in itself. But peace in Afghanistan can also help promote peace, harmony and prosperity in the wider region of Central and South Asia. These goals are worthy of our best efforts.

The President (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I should like to inform members that action on draft resolution A/49/L.45 will be taken at a later date to be announced in the *Journal*.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.